

REMARKS

On a new Way of PREACHING,

Propos'd in an
Ordination S E R M O N

Preach'd at
TAUNTON, *Octob.* the 7th, 1730.

And likewise
On some *QUERIES* relating to the same
Subject, a Way of preaching which the
Author acknowledgeth was never used by
Christ nor his Apostles.

Together with
Some previous *ANIMADVERSIONS* on a Book,
entitl'd, *Some Thoughts concerning the Proofs of a Future
State from Reason.*

By *JOHN BALL.*

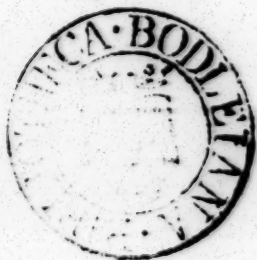
COL. ii. 8.
Beware, lest any man spoil you thro' philosophy and vain deceit,

1 COR. i. 22. — ii. 1, 2.
The Greeks seek after wisdom. — I came neither with ex-
cellency of speech or wisdom; for I determined to know
nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

L O N D O N;

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and Sold at his Shop in Chelmsford. 1736. (Price 3d.)

THE QUERIES have no Name
set to them; if they are
not this Author's own, I suppose
them the Work of his, penn'd and
printed with his Approbation, and
treat them as such; if I am mistaken
in this, the Querist must take what
I say of them to himself.



SOME
REMARKS

On a new Way of
PREACHING, &c.

I Shall begin the Animadversions, I intend to make on some Opinions lately vented, with a few Reflections on a Discourse, not long since publish'd, in order to prove the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State, from the Light of Reason. Which tho' it may not have those dangerous Consequences with some other Opinions of the same Author, which I shall consider hereafter; yet I think his Notion is built upon Mistakes.

If I take him right, he reasons thus: Whatsoever thinks, or reasons, is a Spirit, is indivisible, and therefore immortal. I doubt this Argument will extend beyond the Author's Intention, to prove the Brutes immortal also.

For whatever Men may fancy in their Studies, who are ready to think, that nothing can be, that is not agreeable to their Notion; a little Observation of the Brute Creatures

will shew, that they have Reason, and draw Consequences, and act with great Cunning in the Pursuit of the Ends for which they were design'd by their Creator: To find their Food, to know their Danger, to protect and provide for their Young, and to be serviceable to Man, for his Pleasure or Advantage. As for Instance, If you see a Man with a Gun, seeking Game, going very softly, looking over a Hedge, then removing to another Place, looking this Way and that Way; sometimes going forward, sometimes backward; no one would deny that this Man acts upon Reason. And all this you may see in a setting Dog; and that he acts, not by Necessity of Nature, but by Thought and much Cunning, and Caution too. Now, when the very same appears in this Brute, that we call Reason in Man, Why shall we not give it the Term of Reason? unless it is, because wise Philosophers say, that Man only is a rational Creature.

As to the second Thing this Author advances, upon which he builds the Proof of the Soul's Immortality, its Indivisibility or Indiscerptibility (as he phraseth it) we know very little of Spirits, as to their Substance; and therefore can but reason about them, as a blind Man about Colours. Whatever Imagination studious Men may have of Spirits, by long musing in their Thoughts,

Thoughts, I believe, none of the Vulgar, either Christian or Heathen, ever built their Hopes of Immortality upon this, that their Souls were indivisible, and would not fall in Pieces, as their Bodies will, after a short Time; or, that the Soul was indiscerptible, and could not be pull'd in Pieces by little Bits one after another. If any Man should imagine, that God had made a lower Sort of Spirits to be the Souls of Brutes, which should die with their Bodies; as he could not prove his Assertion to be true, so I know not what would prove it to be false.

But it will be said, that such Notions will destroy all the Proof of the Immortality of human Souls from the Light of Nature. There is no such Consequence to be fear'd, because we see that in Man, of which we have not the least Footstep in Brutes, that is, a Sense of moral Good and Evil; a Law written in the Hearts of all Men, *Rom. ii.* a Conscience that accuses or excuses, and puts Men in mind of God's Judgment.

All Men have this Notion of God, that he is Just and Righteous, and loves good Men, and hates Wickedness, and will punish not only gross Sins that are committed in the Sight of Men, but secret Sins; nay even wicked Purposes, tho' never accomplished, as you see *Acts xxviii.* The Heathen thought, that Vengeance would follow a Murtherer, and overtake him some Time

Time or other. The very Poets tells us of Lashes of Conscience; and that Conscience fears God's Vengeance, and supposes the very Thought of Wickedness to be criminal. Now, when they saw Sin to be triumphant in this World, good Men loaden with Afflictions, and many times falling as a Prey to the worst of Men, this carried their Thoughts to the Belief of another Place and Time, when God would shew himself a righteous Judge. This was that which comforted *Socrates* when he was dying by Degrees of the Poison that was given him by the State. He tells you again and again, that he was not certain that this Opinion was true. (They did feel after God, if haply they might find him.) But however, he had such a Persuasion of it, as took away from him the Fears of Death. And the Apostle, I think, reasons the same Way, *2 Thes. i. 6. It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, &c.* But Life and Immortality are brought to Light by the Gospel.

You find, in *Tully*, that many learned Men believed not the Immortality of the Soul. And *Seneca* says, that Philosophers did persuade us to believe a Life after this, rather than to prove it.

We come now to consider what the same Author says, as to the Case of the Heathen, which the Apostle speaks of in *Rom. i.* But
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before we come to Particulars, I am willing to enquire, whether it be easy to give a Reason, why so much has been preach'd and printed of late, to persuade Men that the Condition of the Heathen World is not so bad as the Apostle represents it, since we are by no Means to be their Judges, but God only? And indeed, their Case will neither be better nor worse for our reasoning about it. Do Men think that they can give a Reason for all that God does, as to his Providence in governing the World? Such as have tried to give a Reason of all his Ways, have been forc'd to confess that they know not how to reconcile his universal Love to all his Creatures, as he is their Creator, and one that willeth not the Death of a Sinner: I say, they are at a Loss to reconcile this to his Providence in sending his Gospel to so little a Part of the World. Even *Limborch* here cries out with the Apostle, *How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! And there is a Day of the Declaration of the righteous Judgment of God.* And I find one short Sentence of Bishop *Wilkins* quiets me more, than all that is writ about the Salvation of the Heathen, *That God hath not told us, what he will do with them, and it is Presumption in us to tell him, what he must do.* I can think of no other Reason for Men's pleading the Case of the Heathen, than be-
cause

cause as our Author tells us, we are in an Age of Free-Thinkers, even against the plainest Scriptures. They may think themselves in no Danger, if they are sincere; of which we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

Our Author tells you, he will be the Heathens Advocate, and has a Way to excuse them that are deepest sunk in Idolatry, provided they be not scandalously vicious. (*p.* 183.) And what then shall we say to his Profession of Friendship to Revelation and Reason, as in his Book of Queries lately publish'd?

Paul was taught immediately from the Mouth of Christ, and had the Spirit of God to lead him into all Truth; yet he must come under the Correction of our rational Divines. For if *Paul* says, *the Heathen are without excuse*, yet they tell us they can make Excuses for them. Indeed I have heard, they hope for another Translation of the Bible. When it comes, I wish they would be so kind as to give Marginal Notes, to acquaint us, when the Apostle is to be believ'd, and when not. For if it be certain he is mistaken in one Thing, he may in many more; and accordingly must not be look'd upon as infallible. And is this the Use of Reason in Religion, to exalt it against the Scriptures, which holy Men of God wrote by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost?

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Socinus was a great Reasoner, and he tells us, he did not believe a Thing, because he found it in the Scriptures; but first consulted, whether the Thing was agreeable to his Reason, and then believed what was written, otherwise not. So we find he could not believe that Christ died as a Sacrifice of Atonement, and bore our Sins: And therefore he takes a great deal of pains to elude all those Scriptures, that speak so plainly of this important Article of our Faith, and Foundation of our Hope towards God. He could not believe that Christ had any Being before his Conception in the Virgin's Womb; so that he expounds the first of *John*, which speaks of Christ's Eternity, and creating of all Things, to be meant of his setting up the Gospel-Church: And was so fond of it, as to think he received this Exposition by Inspiration.

And do not many of our rational Divines copy after him, who endeavour to interpret away the plainest Places of Scripture, to establish their own Notions, which they call Reason and Philosophy? You see there are some, that come up pretty near to his Way of using the holy Scriptures.

But to come to our Author's Comment on the first Chapter to the *Romans*. He begins with telling us, that the Apostle must not be understood to speak of all the Heathens without Exception, not of the Age of *Abraham* and *Lot*, but of the Times he himself liv'd in: When I can see no manner of Exception to be made, but they were all Ido-

laters. *Athens*, the School of the Philosophers, that profess'd themselves wise, was wholly given to Idolatry. The *Galatians* did service unto them, who by Nature were no Gods. The *Thessalonians* were but just converted from Idols to serve the living and true God; so that it is plain, all the Heathens we read of in the *New Testament* were gross Idolaters.

But our Author makes light of this, who distinguishes Idolatry into abominable Idolatry, and excusable Idolatry, as we shall see anon; whereas St. *Paul* has no Reserve for any of the Heathen at all, and represents their Case as very deplorable, *Rom. i. 20, 21*. But he forgot himself too, for afterwards he gives you this Account of them himself, *pag. 167*. *That there was need of extraordinary Grace, when Men were fallen into so deplorable a Condition, thro' their own inexcusable Abuse of those Means and Opportunities, which God had given 'em to know and do his Will.* And then one would think they were without Excuse in their deplorable Condition. So that we see, when Men's Thoughts do cool, and abate of their Warmth in defending their darling Opinions, the Truth appears.

So, it is ordinary for some Men vehemently to oppose the Doctrine of Childrens suffering for their Parents Sin. Yet our Author (who, I take it, is of that Opinion) tells you, (*pag. 148.*) that it pleas'd God so to order Things, that the Branches should partake of the good or evil Qualities of the Stock; and so one Man ruin'd human Race, and another

other restor'd it. Men can forget themselves sometimes, and then the Truth breaks out.

But we come to speak of the particular Excuses he makes for the Heathen, *pag. 182.* *There might be some that went to the Idols Temples, the only Places of publick Worship, to avoid the Imputation of Atheism and Irreligion, not partaking any otherwise than by their bare Presence in what was done there.*

Now, tho' a Man doth not worship with Idolaters, yet his bare Presence at their Worship, as it has a Tendency to confirm Men in Idolatry, appears to me to be a Sin; and a good Man is bound, I think, to bear a Testimony against Idolatry, and not be ashamed to appear for the Worship of the one and true God.

But our Author tells us, *pag. 183.* *That he sees no reason why we may not have Charity [think well of their Case] as to those that were sunk deeper into Idolatry, provided they were honest minded.* He tells you therefore, *pag. 184.* speaking of *abominable* Idolatry, that that was such Idolatry as was attended with all manner of Lewdness, Cruelty and Excess of Riot; and this he allows to be inexcusable. But the Idolatry, in which Men were honest minded (that is sincere in what they did) was excusable Idolatry. Which sounds, as if Idolatry in such was a very small Sin.

But *Paul* teaches the contrary; that God was so provoked by the Heathens debasing and changing the Glory of God, in making Images of him, that therefore he gave them

over to all their unnatural Lusts and vile Affections, without any Restraint; so that indeed their Lewdness was a Punishment of their Idolatry. Whereas our Author thinks, if they were honest and sincere in what they did, he can excuse them. What therefore do Men mean by Sincerity? A Man may be said to act sincerely, when he acts according to his present Thoughts, tho' he might, and ought to know better.

And will this excuse Men? This the Apostle tells you was the Case of the Heathen, and therefore they were without all Excuse, because they might have known God's eternal Power and God-head by the Works of Creation; and then they might have consider'd, there was no Likeness to be made of him.

Again let me ask; Will such Sincerity excuse them that thought they did God service by killing his Saints? And such a Sincerity may Men have, that are given up by God to strong Delusions, to believe a Lie. If such Sincerity will excuse a Man, it is comfortable Doctrine for the Deists, who will tell you, how sincere they are in their Unbelief. And according to these Men, *Paul's* Case was as good before his Conversion, as it was afterward; for he verily thought he ought to do as he did. Yet he tells us, it was abundant Grace that pardon'd him, and that Christ made him an Example of his Goodness to encourage other heinous Sinners to Repentance, 1 *Tim.* i.

Therefore

Therefore this kind of Sincerity will excuse no one. The Sincerity of a Servant to a Master must be prov'd by his Care to know his Master's Will; and this Sincerity the Apostle tells you, the Heathen had not. For by the visible World, they might have known God's eternal Power and God-head, and that the Creator of all Things could never be like to the Things created by him. They likewise held the Truth in Unrighteousness, and liked not to retain God in their Knowledge; which the Apostle says, render'd them inexcusable: Tho' our Author is more knowing, and can make Excuses for them.

We come now to consider, what the same Author, in another Book, has deliver'd about his preaching the Gospel. He tells you in the Sermon preach'd at *Taunton*, That Christ took a dogmatical Way in his Teaching, *and tho' what he taught and what the sacred Writings, by which the Christian Revelation is convey'd down to us contain, is perfectly reasonable, yet there is very little Reasoning upon it; for this he left to the Expounders of Revelation*, who take a new Way of preaching, of which we have no Example in Christ's preaching, *p. 19.* And surely they think their own a better Way, or else they might be content to follow him. Whither will philosophical Pride carry Men? All that he says upon this Head, casts the greatest Reproach upon Christ and his Preaching. Yet he had the Fulness of the Spirit, and came into the World to save Souls from Ignorance and Darkness. And is our Author wiser or
more

more compassionate to the Souls of Men than he was? Can he do better? Yes, as he thinks; for he offers at several Things to shew the Excellence of his own Way of preaching, above that which our Saviour took, who was the great Prophet of the Church and a Teacher come from God. See *Pref. to his Book of Queries*, pag. 5. where he says, *The Promises and Threatnings do not perhaps so directly influence the Conversion of the Heart to God; but rather indirectly, as they work upon our Passions, and engage us to consider more seriously and attentively, than we should otherwise do, the Reasonableness of Religion, and the intrinsic Value and native Beauty of Holiness, &c.* But this Way of preaching Christ did not think fit to take, and then who would chuse to follow him in his indirect Way of converting Souls, while our Author can shew a more direct and ready Way to Heaven, than ever Christ did. Methinks, he that could make such Excuses for the Heathen, should have made some Excuse for Christ too. Was it Want of Will or Skill, that made him use such a round about Way? Or, did he reserve this Blessing for our Author to be a new Light to the World, after so many hundred Years of Ignorance concerning the best Way of preaching the Gospel, to convert Souls to God.

As to his Quotation out of Dr. *W.* I have no great Apprehension of that Author's Weight or Authority in this Matter. In Counterbalance to which, I may mention the Opinion of a much greater Man of his own Nation, Mr. *Halyburton*, who tells us in his
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Life,

Life, that is prefac'd by Dr. *Watts*, pag. 141. *That one reason why the Gospel is so unsuccessful at this Day is, because the Simplicity of preaching is neglected, a due Application of Scripture being the best preaching, for confirming of which, it is remarkable, that God may make use of the Words of Man in letting us into the Meaning of it; yet 'tis the very Scripture Word, whereby he ordainarily conveys the Comfort or Advantage of what sort soever; 'tis this Tool of God's own framing, that works the Effect.* So pag. 145. he inveighs against pressing evangelical Doctrines, without an Eye to that which is the Spring of the Churches Edification, the Spirit of the Lord. Some press to Duties so, that they seem to think that that their Reasonings are able to inforce a Compliance. And in another Place, pag. 199. he said on his Death-bed, O Sirs, *I dread mightily that a rational Sort of Religion is coming in among us.* I will also add the Opinion of a very worthy Countryman of our own, Mr. *David Soame*, in his Sermon on Methods for the reviving Religion, pag. 15. *If we would acquit our selves as Ministers of the N. Testament, and manage our Practical Discourses in a way suitable to the Gospel Dispensation, we must direct Men to those Assistances which are promised, and to those animating Motives which are propos'd there, to enable and incline 'em to purify themselves from the Pollutions, &c. nothing will be done without Divine Influences, and there are no Arguments so forcible as those which are taken from Evangelical Considerations; and if*
these

these are omitted, we shall treat on moral Subjects with less Propriety and Spirit than many Heathens have done. And, pag. 31. he has this Expression, after an earnest Exhortation to Prayer and Fasting, to obtain the Presence of God's Spirit with us; this Holy Spirit is all we need to recover the languishing Interest of Religion, and diffuse Vigour and Beauty thro' our Churches.

But our Author seems to rely upon the Dint of Reason, in order to convey Religion to the Heart. For in *pag. 6. of his Queries*, he speaks with very great Concern, *that Men are taught Religion without shewing a rational Sense of Good and Evil. And pag. 7. he complains that Men are taught what is good by meer Authority, or Awe of future Rewards and Punishments; without ever explaining the Nature and Justice of the Commands, which will contribute no more to promote a liberal Piety and Vertue than Whips and Sugar-Plums.*

Was this Man past all blushing? Can there be a greater Reproach cast upon Christ's Preaching than this? That his way of Preaching could contribute nothing at all to the promoting of real Piety. In his Book of the Future State, &c. he chimes in with Dr. W--t, *pag. 8. Pref. whosoever shews Men the intrinsic Beauty of Holiness, and the Foundation which the Commands of the Gospel have, in the Reason of Mens Minds, and the Nature of Things; and shews Christianity to be the Result of right Reason, is a better Friend to Christianity, than he who hath only respect to the Evidence of Revelation.*

Now,

Now, what Excuse can we have for our Master, who never told us one Word of this? But we have another Advantage too by this Sort of Preaching; *that we shall love and thank God more than we should do by Christ's Way of Preaching. For such a Man contemplates God, not only as the God of Grace, but as the God of Nature, speaking to the universal Reason of Mankind.*

I cannot see, but according to these Mens Thoughts we have a greater Happiness now, than those that liv'd in Christ's Time; and if he was now to preach in his *dogmatical* Way, we should get more by hearing our Author, or the famous Dr. *W---t.*

How proud do Men grow of their Knowledge, which the least Creature of God will confound! And how are they puff'd up with Philosophy, and a fleshly Mind, which our Author may think as gross a Contradiction as carnal Reason. But we talk after the Apostle who was no Philosopher. And if Men can fall so much in love with themselves, as to think their Way of Preaching more profitable to Salvation than Christ's; no wonder if they condemn such Men, whose Sermons and Writing God has blessed to the Conversion of so many Souls. I wish we could hear of more Success from this new-fashion Preaching.

The Ministers of the last Age are blam'd by some, as if by their Strictness of Life and Doctrine, they prejudic'd Men against Religion; but whenever they come to *free Thoughts*, (to use our Author's Words) they are secure from that Danger. Indeed he seem to sup-

pose what he dares not believe, *p.* 21. That there was a Time when a dogmatical Way of Preaching (the Phrase he gives to Christ's Preaching) without proving, and a mechanical Way of raising Men's Passions might answer the great End of Preaching; for he is sensible, that was the very Way that Christ took. This odd Way of Preaching without Reasoning or Proof, it seems, may possibly answer the great End of Preaching, tho' not so well as his Way; and that mechanical Men might influence the Minds and Passions of Men. I thank him for that Supposition, whether it be his Belief or no. What could he expect from Men that had the Bible only, when they had no Reasoning, no deep Insight into Philosophy, no Acquaintance with such new Lights and great Masters of Reason, as *Mr. Locke*, to teach them this rational Way of Preaching. But as Truth will out sometimes at unawares, he cannot deny their Preaching to be in some Sense rational too; to tell Men that in keeping God's Commands is great Reward; that Wisdom's Ways are Ways of Pleasantness; he that sinneth wrongeth his own Soul. This was what those mechanical Men preach'd, which our Author is so good as to suppose, might answer the great End of Preaching, the saving of Mens Souls; tho' in all these Places there is not a Word of the Nature of Things nor their Agreeableness to universal Reason.

If the Ministers, whom God honour'd with such Success, are treated with so much Scorn, what must private Christians look for who take care to breed up their Children in the Nurture

and Admonition of the Lord. I appeal to the Author's own Experience, whether they deserv'd the Disgrace that he and Dr. *W---t* have cast upon 'em. For I my self knew this Author's Parents, deservedly to have had a great Reputation for Piety, and therefore must be suppos'd to have taught their Children the Principles of Religion, and shewn 'em the Scriptures from whence they were gather'd. No doubt, they told 'em, these Commandments were no other than the Commandments of the great God, who had promis'd all Blessings to the Obedient, and threaten'd a Hell to the Disobedient and Rebellious. Was this the Way only to amaze their Children (the Word which he uses for mechanical Preachers) was it to make them afraid, where no Fear was, as Nurses fright their Children with the *Black-man*, or *Bloody-bones*? They were indeed no Philosophers, but they thought it the highest Reason that Men should obey his Commands, who after he had killed, was able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell-fire. But the wise Doctor says, this is to please Children with Sugar-Plums, and to fright 'em with Whips, and not likely to do any Good, because they did not form their Minds to a rational Sense of Good and Evil, or give 'em a Taste and Relish for Virtue.

This, indeed, I believe, the Author's Parents might not do any farther than the Divine Word directed 'em. For this new Light is sprung up since; and Men believ'd in their Days, that the Scriptures were able to make them wise to Salvation.

But doth our Doctor see that in this Language

he reproach'd Christ, who taught by Precepts, Promises and Threatnings, without shewing the Nature of Good and Evil, in what they call a rational Way? Wo to our Saviour when he falls into Hands of Philosophers and rational Divines! His Enemies in his Life-time call'd him a *Madman*; and what do these Men call him, when they tell us, he used a Method in Preaching, fit only to please Children and fright Fools? But the Doctor asks, whether this was the Way that *Solomon* meant, when he said, *Train up a Child in the Way, &c?* Yes surely, the very Way, as a little Acquaintance with the *Proverbs* will convince us. *Solomon* says, his Father taught him to get Wisdom and Understanding; and his Father tells you, that he got this Wisdom that is better than Rubies out of the Bible. *Tbro' thy Precepts I get understanding, Ps. cxix. I have more understanding than all my Teachers, because I keep thy Precepts.* And by the Scriptures he learnt that Fear of God, which he says, is the Beginning or the chief of all Wisdom. So that, until Men will give us a rational Bible, we will teach our Children as those that fear'd God, did before us. *Timothy* had a very pious Grandmother and Mother, and from a Child he learn'd the holy Scriptures. And God commanded, *Deut. vi.* that his Words should be taught diligently to Children; and there is no Mention of the natural Difference of Good and Evil, or to convince them of the Reasonableness of the Duties enjoin'd. God speaketh like himself, and enforceth by his Authority (I am the Lord, and thus saith the Lord) by Promises to the Obedient, and

Curfes

Curses to the Disobedient; though these are Sugar-Plums and Whips to Philosophers, who imagine they have a better Way to give Men a true Relish of Piety.

In the next Place our Author tells you (*Queries, p. 21.*) that we should have Respect to the Genius of the Age, and its Desire of rational Knowledge and free Enquiry. And this Taste for Enquiries I shall shew is to set up their own Imaginations, tho' never so contrary to the plainest Scriptures. Our Saviour took not this Way: He preach'd the Gospel to the Poor, and the common People heard him gladly. And he took no care to please the Taste of the Free-Thinkers, as indeed you find our Author seems to complain, that he reason'd upon nothing. *Paul at Athens* did not long tarry at the Argument of Reason to shew the Excellency of the Christian Religion, to please the Taste of the Philosophers; but immediately after he had boldly reprov'd their Idolatry, he preacheth Christ and the Resurrection and the Judgment to come, without any rational Proof, tho' he had the least Success amongst the rational Philosophers. But as to the Taste of our Age; *Episcopus*, a rational Divine, mislead Dr. *Tillotson* to give a Shock to the Belief of the Eternity of Hell Torments; for he translated him almost Word for Word.

But we go much farther; Mr. *Whiston* tells you in his Memoirs of Dr. *Clarke*, that this had been his Opinion a long time; and that the Torments of Hell were not eternal he learnt by his Conversation with Sir *Isaac Newton* and the Dr. (great Philosophers) that it was their O-
pinion

pinion also. * At length Dr. *Clarke* plainly told him, that he believ'd most learn'd Men were of the same Mind; notwithstanding that the Scripture tells us so plainly, of a Worm that never dies, and a Fire that is never quench'd; that the Smoke of their Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. But all this is nothing to rational Men, who think it not just that God should punish Sin committed in this World with eternal Misery. These are the Men that are for rational Enquiries, and free Thoughts; and shall Dissenters lackey after 'em? God forbid!

For by this Means they have laid aside one of the great Arguments our Saviour us'd to make Men cast away their beloved Sins, *Mar. ix.* and an Argument that awes good Men as well as bad, *1 Cor. ix.* lest when I have preach'd to others, I my self should be a Cast-away. But these are the Doctrines that give Satisfaction to vicious Men, who are willing to eat and drink and enjoy their Lusts without Restraint. Heaven they cannot have, and they care not for it, for they hate Holiness; but are afraid of being shut up in everlasting Fire, with the Devil and his Angels: But now our learn'd and free Enquirers have pretty well deliver'd them from this Fear; and Mr. *Locke* also (who is so much admir'd and recommended to Students in Divinity, who was above Ordinances and the Worship of God) has provided also for the Comfort of such Christians as he was, by expounding the Threatning, *Thou shalt surely die* (as is mentioned by our Au-

* Whose Sermons are in such vogue, and who has taken pains, in print, to show you how to play the Hypocrite with God and Man, by subscribing to what you don't believe; but there's no Danger if there be no Hell.

thor without blaming him) that the Wicked should after Death have no Sense, no nor Being. This is the Annotator, whose Books are so much admir'd and celebrated, a rare Light and Guide to Dissenting Candidates and young Divines: But this is welcome Doctrine; for when Men are got clear of the Dread of everlasting Torments, they will be easy to entertain strange Doctrines, and be weary of striving to enter in at the strait Gate, and find out an easier Religion, when there remains no Fear of Hell after Death.

An Instance of this we have in the History of the late K. of *Sweden*, who fell into Acquaintance with Mr. *Leibnitz* in the Course of his *German* Conquests, and had many Conferences with him. After which Time it was observ'd he grew very cold in Religion, and indifferent to the Duties of it, whereas before he had most regularly kept up Prayer and other Parts of Religion, like *Gustavus Adolphus*; but this was some of the Fruit of a great Genius, that lov'd Reason and free Enquiries. Of this Philosopher *Leibnitz*, we read in *Whiston's* Life of Dr. *Clarke*, that he was a great Reasoner, but was over reason'd, he says, by Dr. *Clarke*; which Sir *Isaac Newton* would say, cost him his Life.

But to go farther with our Author, he gives you more of Mr. *Locke's* Thoughts, p. 109. that the Life of Man is wholly extinguish'd by Death, from God's Threatning before the Fall, and re-kindled again at the Resurrection, and then lost a second Time for ever, that they have no Life or Sense who do not believe the Gospel. Is not this great Comfort to wicked Men, if they can be but once persuaded that there shall be

no eternal Sufferings remaining for them in the World to come?

By these Passages you may guess how little Satisfaction it must be to them that examine Candidates for the Ministry, to have their Confession only in Scripture Words. Since they may tell us that they believe all the Scripture, and recite all these Places that speak of an eternal Hell, and yet be persuaded of no such Thing: And so they may do in other Articles of Religion. So that when the Candidates cry out so much upon Impositions, when desir'd to give their Sense of Scripture, there is Reason to fear how far they are gone among rational and philosophical Divines and Free-Thinkers; who believe the Word of God just so far as they like it, and use *Socinus's* Way of interpreting it.

And now I can call God to record upon my Soul, that I wrote not this out of Envy to any ones Reputation, or for Interest of any Kind. But who can be silent to see the Way that our Lord took in preaching vilify'd, and when Men are come to think, they can succeed better by Fancies of their own, which they call Philosophy? I HOPE MINISTERS WILL REMEMBER, THAT THE SCRIPTURES ARE PROFITABLE FOR INSTRUCTION, &c. TO MAKE THE MAN OF GOD PERFECT, and will faithfully preach *them*, instead of making Harangues upon Virtue; and their Hearers also will remember, that they are not to receive spiritual Advantage by Words of Man's Wisdom, but it is God's Word that is the appointed Means to save their Souls.

